

DEBORAH R. STOBER

SENATE JUDICIARY
EXHIBIT NO. 2
DATE 3/6/09
BILL NO. SB372

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March 5, 2009

Sent via e-mail to: pschindler@mt.gov

Dear Chairman Perry and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Due to the current Winter Weather Advisory I have decided to not risk driving to Helena to speak before you. I can only hope that this letter adequately conveys the importance of my request that you approve HB372 providing for "family friendly" jury duty laws for the citizens of Montana.

We have laws that require employers to give maternity leave, yet we don't allow these same people to be excused from jury service.

This legislation is not just for breast-feeding mothers, baby-boomers are becoming the elderly and there's not enough adequate or affordable care available for them. Can you even imagine having to hire a stranger on short notice to care for your father who suffers from Alzheimer's when your mother is called for jury duty?

The need for this legislation is not unique to Montana. Many other states have already addressed it. According to La Leche League International, as of July 2007, 11 states specifically addressed the issue of breast-feeding and jury duty exemption: California, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nebraska, Kansas, Oregon, Idaho, Oklahoma, Illinois, Virginia, and Iowa. Several other states, such as Florida, have jury duty laws that are considered "family friendly."

According to <http://familyfriendlyjuryduty.org/JuryDutyFEDS/JuryDutyFEDS.htm> The U.S. District Court, District of Montana has the following provision:

United States District Court, District of Montana

Jury Plan; VII Creating Qualified Jury Wheels; C. Excuses on Individual Request (2)

Approved May 23, 2003

(3) **"Persons having active care and custody of a child or children under 10 years of age whose health and/or safety would be jeopardized by their absence for jury service; or a person who is essential to the care of an aged or infirm person."**

Our society has evolved and changed, yet jury duty laws haven't. Please vote to approve HB372, and remember that "family friendly" jury duty laws aren't for the caretakers, they are for those that they provide care for.

Thank You,

Deb Stober